



THE CLEVELAND MUSEUM OF ART

NEWS

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Graceful and Sophisticated Congolese Performers Make Ohio Debut at the Cleveland Museum of Art on July 30

*“Delicious melodies, inspired and original arrangements,
faultless and non-indulgent playing, scalp-tingling voices.” – BBC Radio*

CLEVELAND (July 13, 2004) — Reinventing traditional Congolese Rumba with infectious rhythms and innovative orchestration, Kékélé makes their Ohio debut at the **Cleveland Museum of Art’s Gartner Auditorium** on, **Friday, July 30, at 7:30 p.m.** This concert is presented as part of the Museum’s acclaimed **Carnevale World Music and Dance Series**.

Tickets are available for \$24 and \$22, CMA members \$21 and \$19, by calling (216) 421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033 or buying online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

Kékélé lends originality and excitement to traditional *Rumba Congolaise* — an irresistible mix of Cuban rumba and African rhythms. The 2003 release of their second album, “Congo Life,” represents a revival of the classic sound prior to the overshadowing popularity of the more frantic “soukous” style. The traditional acoustic guitar-led rumbas are decorated with vast and innovative instrumentation featuring combinations of flute, violin, accordion, saxophone, trumpet, clarinet, vibraphone and marimba. The group’s enchanting vocals and vivacious rhythms flow in harmony with the unique instrumental arrangements adding a modern dimension to classic Congolese music.

With careers spanning several decades, the members of Kékélé are widely recognized as true leaders among the Congolese music scene. Bumba Massa and Loko Massengo have careers as top solo singers dating back to the 1960s and the remaining members are the notable founders of the 1980s soukous group “Les Quatre Etoiles.” While most of the group members had previously collaborated in performance, in most cases they had never recorded together.

The band was first conceptualized during a series of casual jam sessions in 1999. Material composed during the sessions inspired the 2001 release of Kékélé’s debut album, “Rumba Congo.” Encouraged by the success of their first album the group embarked on a European tour, working to define their distinctive style and expand their repertoire. The release of their second album, “Congo Life,” sparked their first North American tour and marked the success of Kékélé’s innovative and sophisticated revival of the beloved Congolese rumba.

(more)

The next performance in the Carnevale series will feature the exuberant music of **Pink Martini, on Friday, Aug. 6 at 7:30 p.m. in the Museum's Gartner Auditorium.** Nominated twice for France's Victoires de la Musique awards, the ten-member ensemble blends influences from Cuban rumbas to classical chamber music, from Parisian café tunes to foreign film soundtracks, creating music that is at once sensuous and intelligent. Tickets are available for \$30 and \$27, CMA members \$27 and \$25 by calling (216) 421-7350 or 1-888-CMA-0033 or buying online at www.ClevelandArt.org.

Promotional support for the Carnevale series is provided by WCPN 90.3 FM and The *Free Times*. The project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts, which believes that a great nation deserves great art.

The Cleveland Museum of Art receives operating support from the Ohio Arts Council.

The Cleveland Museum of Art is one of America's leading comprehensive Museums. Its permanent collection is world renowned for its quality and breadth, spanning 6,000 years. The Museum is a significant international forum for exhibitions, scholarship and art acquisitions. For more information on the Museum, its holdings, programs, services and events, call 1-888-CMA-0033 or visit www.ClevelandArt.org.

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